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Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

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‘Nature has done everything for Sydney, man nothing; man has done everything for Melbourne, nature nothing,’ a visitor to Australia once noted. Herein lies the essential difference between Australia’s two largest cities. Melbourne is Australia’s second city, but it has plenty of first-class qualities, from a buzzing arts scene to its enormous range of restaurants. It may have a few grey days, and a muddy river instead of a beautiful harbour, but don’t let that worry you. The lack of natural attractions has meant that Melbourne has had to create its own man-made pleasures … and in doing so it has become Australia’s cultural capital. Theatre, music, street sculpture, fashion – in fact, there are hardly any forms of artistic expression which you can’t find here – all thrive, alongside a cosmopolitan mix of cafés, restaurants and pubs.

What’s great about Melbourne for the visitor is how accessible all these arts are. As well as traditional museums and galleries like the National Gallery of Victoria and concert halls, like Hamer Hall, there are an enormous number of smaller art spaces and venues which cater for every kind of taste. Art is not something for a small minority. In fact, for most inhabitants of Melbourne a weekly visit to the cinema or an art exhibition is a routine event. Several festivals take place during the winter months including the International Film Festival in July and the Fringe Festival in September which has loads of interesting (even if not always that good!) comedy, dance and theatre acts.

If the locals appreciate their art, they absolutely love their sport. Lots of people around the world will know the Australian Formula One Grand Prix and the Australian Open Tennis, which attracts over half a million spectators to Melbourne in a carnival atmosphere, but few people will be familiar with the sports Melburnians themselves follow. Australian rules football and cricket enjoy a huge amount of support and, if you have enough time, a visit to see either is well worth it just for the atmosphere. If you’re looking to participate rather than just watch, why not try a bit of surfing or swimming? Cycling, jogging or a visit to one of Melbourne’s many gyms are other possibilities. All this information is on our website at thetravelshow.org so do have a look if …

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